

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

November 9, 2017

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In advance of your upcoming trip to Vietnam, I write to express concern regarding the Government of Vietnam's continued human rights violations. As Vietnam seeks to expand bilateral relations with the United States, I urge you to pressure the Vietnamese government to address its continued human rights abuses, and to demand their commitment to improving human rights as a precondition to enhanced bilateral relations.

The Government of Vietnam remains one of the most oppressive regimes in the Asia-Pacific region. As you may know, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended designating Vietnam as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) for violations of religious freedom. Additionally, the State Department's Annual Report on Human Rights stated that, "The most significant human rights problems in the country were severe government restrictions of citizens' political rights, particularly their right to change their government through free and fair elections; limits on citizens' civil liberties, including freedom of assembly, association, and expression; and inadequate protection of citizens' due process rights, including protection against arbitrary detention." Moreover, these abuses are in direct violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam is a signatory thereof.

During your visit, I request that you send a clear message to the Vietnamese government—and to those they oppress—that the United States supports a free civil society and stands ready to engage with the people of Vietnam. I request that you also meet with leaders of religious communities—such as the Con Dau parishioners—and other human rights activists who are wholly dedicated to improving human rights conditions in Vietnam.

It is imperative that the Vietnamese government understand that in order to have an enhanced partnership with the United States, it must make meaningful, sustained improvements to protect human rights and uphold the rule of law.

Respectfully,

  
JOHN CORNYN  
United States Senator